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Arizona State University officials are hoping Congress will approve an array of energy proposals and appropriations bills that would provide millions in funding for renewable energy programs.

The university has already received \$15 million in economic stimulus funds from the U.S. Department of Energy and for research in solar technology.

ASU officials are also pushing proposals that include \$79 million to create so-called "Energy Innovation Hubs" around the country and \$115 million to boost educational programs that deal with clean energy.

The funding is "extremely crucial to keep these proposals moving forward," said Neal Woodbury, deputy director of The Biodesign Institute at ASU.

Woodbury spoke to a group that included U.S. Rep. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin, D-S.D., who was at ASU Friday to tour its bio-fuels research facilities. Herseth Sandlin, who serves on the House Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming, toured the Institute with U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell, a Democrat whose district includes ASU. They were accompanied by Clive Betts, a member of British Parliament.

Herseth Sandlin said she was impressed with the work being done at ASU and that she hoped to draw upon some of it to benefit her constituents in South Dakota.

She said the ability to "maximize renewable resources, such as agricultural waste in South Dakota and solar energy in Arizona," is an important component of sustainability.

She also praised ASU's interdisciplinary research and said its work on creating microbial fuel cells from animal and agricultural waste is being watched closely in South Dakota, she said.

During a roundtable session with university leaders and scientists, Herseth Sandlin and Mitchell were briefed on a variety of programs and initiatives at ASU.

One of those includes next week's World Wide View, which is billed as a "global citizen consultation on climate change."

Phoenix will be one of six cities nationally to participate in the event, which is taking place in 50 countries.

Groups of citizens will be gathering live on the internet to have discussions about global warming and make recommendations that will be sent directly to their state and country's representatives.

Nalini Chhetri, an ASU lecturer, told the group that the discussion of climate change and

decision-making is "beyond just scientists and lobbyists-we've got the public involved for the first time ever."

"This isn't all being done in a vacuum," Mitchell said. He said institutions all across the nation are doing something in regard to renewable energy, but it has really been ASU's President Crow's "whole new vision to bring all the interdisciplinary fields together."